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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. ELLMERS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 16, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RENEE ELLMERS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

"FEARLESS"—STAFF SERGEANT MARK C. WELLS, U.S. ARMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, most Americans are not personally affected by the two wars that America is engaged in the countries of Iraq and Afghanistan. We go about our daily routine. We are concerned about March Madness, the gasoline prices, but war does not really affect most Americans personally. The media doesn't put those events on the front page. They are more concerned about the personal

lives of celebrities than they are about the personal sacrifice of our warriors overseas.

But war is real. Real Americans are tenaciously fighting on two fronts for the rest of us. For them, it is personal; and for their families, it is very personal. The United States is engaged in the longest continuous combat in American history as our troops serve overseas.

Staff Sergeant Mark C. Wells was 31 years of age. He was a member of the United States Army, and he was killed on March 5, 2011, in the Helmand province of Afghanistan by an IED. That is an improvised explosive device. That is the way the cowards that we do battle with fight our troops. Of course, they wouldn't come out in the open because they would be overwhelmingly defeated.

Mark was born in San Jose, California, and his parents live in Spring, Texas, in my district. He joined the United States Army in 2003. Growing up he always said, "I want to be in the Army."

He was a volunteer, Madam Speaker, as all of those that are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are. They are volunteers. They have the motto, "Here am I. Send me." And Mark went. He went to Iraq for 14 months serving on active duty, and he has been in Afghanistan since August of last year. He was a member of the 303 EOD Battalion and, get this, Madam Speaker, an explosive ordinance disposal technician. And, yes, that means exactly what it says.

His dad, Burl, told me this week that his son was "fearless." What a great attribute for an American warrior. And he also wanted to be a soldier. Also, at the age of 12, he learned how to play the bagpipes. It goes back to his Irish heritage. He grew up eating corned beef and cabbage. And when he was in Iraq, one of his assignments was to play the bagpipes at funerals for other soldiers that had been killed in combat.

He would continually say, "I love the Army." His dad said of his son Mark, "He was my personal hero."

His family said he was patriotic, he was a great dad, and he loved America. He leaves behind a wife, Danielle, who is 8 months pregnant, also a son named Finn that is 2 years of age.

His father would say that, "Mark understood the risk involved in being in the Army, but he loved what he was doing. And, what I miss most is I won't be able to talk to him anymore."

Madam Speaker, being in the Army affects people personally, like his father, Burl, and his mother, Sharon; his wife, Danielle; Finn, their son; and a baby yet to be born.

Mark Wells' memorial service will be on St. Patrick's Day. Yes, that Irish heritage comes into play.

Many of us in this House have been down the street at Arlington Cemetery to attend the funerals of our warriors that have been killed overseas. We all know about those bagpipers that stand on the hill and play "Amazing Grace" in the fog as we bury our war dead. So I suspect that on St. Patrick's Day another bagpiper will play for the funeral of Mark Wells, Staff Sergeant of the United States Army, and play that amazing song, "Amazing Grace."

Madam Speaker, the cause for America and the cause for freedom is expensive. It cost America a son, it cost America a husband, and it cost America a daddy.

Where does America get such great men? They are the rare breed. They are the American breed. And our prayers go out for his family. But while we mourn the loss of Mark Wells, we should also thank the good Lord that such men as Mark Wells ever lived.

And that's just the way it is.

TAX EXPENDITURES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. HOYER. Last week, as I have been doing for a number of weeks, I have been speaking about our budget and the crisis that confronts us and the challenge that confronts us.

Last week, former Republican Congressman Joe Scarborough said this about the hard work of getting America out of debt: "The belief of some on the right that America can balance the budget by cutting education, infrastructure, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and home heating assistance to the poor is tantamount to budgetary witchcraft." That was Joe Scarborough, a former conservative Republican Member of Congress from northern Florida.

Last week, Budget Committee Chair PAUL RYAN expressed a similar thought when he said this: "If you literally think you can just balance the budget by cutting waste, fraud, and abuse, foreign aid, and NPR, it doesn't work like that," said PAUL RYAN, chairman of the Budget Committee.

Both Congressman Scarborough and Congressman RYAN are exactly right. Last week I explained why Republicans' spending plan, even as it cripples America's competitiveness, barely makes a dent in our debt. That is because the spending targeted by Republicans, non-security discretionary spending, only amounts to 14 percent of the entire budget. Should we focus on that? Yes. Can we get to where we need to be from there? No.

If you want to meet an arbitrary goal of cutting \$100 billion and you confine yourself to just 14 percent of the budget, you severely damage investments in education, in innovation, and in competitiveness without making our fiscal condition significantly healthier.

That is why, to really get our debt under control, we have to go beyond that 14 percent. We have to stop making the cuts that, while reckless, are politically easy. We have to start doing what is in the best interests of our country even though it is politically hard.

That means addressing the defense spending that takes in more than one quarter of our budget. It means making hard choices that can keep our entitlements strong for generations to come. But we also need to pass deficit-reducing tax reform.

Our Tax Code is a monumental collection of rules and regulations riddled with loopholes and preferences which are a drain on job creation and, frankly, exacerbate the deficit.

□ 1010

Many of those loopholes, or tax expenditures, as they are also called, are popular with all sorts of special interests. But they exact a high price from the rest of us: billions of dollars and more than 225 million collective hours spent on tax preparation, money and time that could be invested in more productive activity.

Just as importantly, when the Tax Code is full of loopholes, businesses and

families start making decisions on maximizing tax breaks, not on their economic common sense. Closing those loopholes in return for lower tax rates frees us all to make more economically sensible choices; in other words, fewer preferences, lower rates.

Closing those loopholes can also reduce the deficit. In the spending bill on the floor this week, total discretionary spending for fiscal year 2011 adds up to \$1.1 trillion, an awful lot of money. How much do our tax expenditures cost for the same fiscal year? Coincidentally, \$1.1 trillion. This chart reflects that reality: \$1.077 trillion in expenditures, \$1.068 trillion, almost exactly the same sum, in tax expenditures. How much do our tax expenditures cost for the same fiscal year? Just as much as we spend on non-security discretionary spending and security spending.

Clearly, tax expenditures must be part of the answer. The two commissions that met to try to focus on getting our deficit under control, making sure that we are economically viable into the next century and making sure that our children are not left in a deep economic hole, that they will have the resources necessary to meet the challenges of their time and will not look at our generation as the generation of debt, said as much.

It must be part of the answer, tax expenditures, because if we attempt to solve our debt without addressing defense, entitlements, and revenues, we are fighting with one hand and four fingers behind our back.

HONORING THE WORK OF THE PIEDMONT WOMEN'S CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor life and the work of a ministry that is literally saving lives in the State of South Carolina. But before I begin, let us pause to recognize our friends in Japan and the tragic loss of life there.

The Piedmont Women's Center is a Christian ministry in the Upstate, providing love and compassion to literally thousands of young women each year who face unplanned pregnancies. By offering free pregnancy tests, limited ultrasounds, and confidential counseling, they have protected the most innocent among us, the unborn.

The doors of this life-affirming ministry opened 20 years ago this day next door to the largest abortion clinic in South Carolina. In 1991, a group of Christians came together and decided to collectively start a ministry funded by individuals, churches, and businesses to offer real alternatives to those in crisis.

The staff and volunteers of the Piedmont Women's Center can hold newborn babies who have been given the gift of life because of their ministry.

They have countless stories of real people, like Liza and her boyfriend, Peter, who came into their center early one Saturday morning with the intent of ending their pregnancy at the abortion clinic next door, a story that I would like to submit and share with you today.

Minutes before this young couple came through the door, the four volunteers at the center joined hands and prayed that God would do a work of redemption in someone's life that morning. Their "Amen" had barely been voiced when the door opened and Liza and Peter, mistaking the center for an abortion clinic, entered and announced they were there for their appointment. In 10 minutes, the life of their 12-week-old unborn child was scheduled to end.

Realizing that they were not at the abortion clinic, they started to leave. The director boldly stepped up and asked them to use the 10 minutes before their appointment to talk about their decision. They agreed.

Alone, Liza went into the counseling room with the director while a volunteer talked with Peter about their unborn child. Later, Peter was invited to join Liza, who had made the decision to trust our director and have an ultrasound. This decision would change their lives forever.

Our volunteer nurse sonographer silently prayed, and with her highly skilled touch, the cold steel of the ultrasound machine came alive with activity. Liza and Peter were mesmerized as they observed the antics of the little life they had conceived. They both melted at the sight of their precious child and completely changed their minds about their abortion.

They wept as they tried to contain their excitement. Not only had a baby been saved, but before their eyes the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords had penetrated their hardened hearts and allowed them to see past their fears and enabled them to accept their child as God's creation.

Liza shared that she was an adopted child, and Peter said his family had offered to help financially so they could continue their college education. They walked out of the center teary-eyed and full of joy, their shining countenance giving evidence to the change that had taken place in their hearts.

Lenna Fox Neill, the CEO for the past 20 years at the Piedmont Women's Center, said she is continually encouraged as she sees more and more in her community who are giving of their time, energy, and resources to see that all life is protected and respected.

Piedmont Women's Center helped establish the South Carolina Association of Pregnancy Care Centers 10 years ago for the purpose of providing a network across the State of compassionate ministries to care for women in need. The abortion rate through collaborative efforts of ministries and legislation has reduced the rate of abortions in my home State of South Carolina almost 50 percent in the last 20 years.